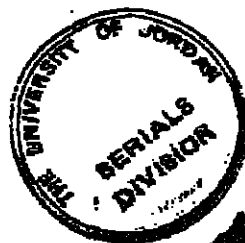


Iran: Saudis do not believe terrorism charges

NICOSIA (R) — Iran quoted Saudi Arabia's defence minister Sunday as saying his country did not believe charges that the Islamic republic posed a threat to its neighbours. The Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz as telling Iran's Ambassador in Riyadh Mohammad Ali Hadi Najafabadi "that his country believed in the fact that Iran did not pose any threat to either the region or Saudi Arabia." IRNA said Prince Sultan, a brother of King Fahd and third in line to the Saudi throne, made his remarks at a meeting with the ambassador in Riyadh Saturday. IRNA said the prince had also described charges of Iranian involvement in terrorism as "unfounded fabrications and propaganda ploy." The United States, which is Saudi Arabia's principal ally, on Saturday denounced Iran as the "most dangerous sponsor of state terrorism." In 1992, according to a report issued in Washington by the State Department, IRNA said Prince Sultan underlined "the deep Riyadh-Tehran historic and cultural relations" and described Iran as "a fraternal, friendly country." The Iranian agency said that preparations for this year's Hajj to Mecca, which takes place later this month, were discussed at the meeting.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، بالرائي

Afghan leaders to talk until settlement

JALALABAD (R) — Rival Afghan guerrilla leaders holding peace talks in an old palace in this eastern city have agreed to continue the negotiations until they reach a settlement, an Afghan politician said Sunday. "They have jointly agreed to be in Jalalabad until they reach agreement," Nangarhar Province Governor Haji Abdul Qadeer told reporters. "There are deep problems and disunity among the Mujahedeen and removing all these problems needs some time. It is not easy to remove them during two or three days," he said. The Mujahedeen leaders began a new round of peace talks amid tight security on Saturday in the Jalalabad palace. Access to the palace was restricted to Mujahedeen leaders only. Mujahedeen sources said Sunday the talks, centred on the formation of a cabinet and prospects for a permanent ceasefire, had made little progress. All of the fractious guerrilla parties signed a peace agreement on March 7 in Islamabad, but sporadic fighting had continued ever after. A spokesman for hardline Prime Minister-designate Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said Mujahedeen leaders held individual talks during the day and were to resume group negotiations Sunday night.

Kidnapped diplomats appeal for help, page 2

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Jordanians show their pride in their King

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Proud of their Hashemite Monarch, Jordanians Sunday celebrated the 40th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers with a massive display of their loyalty to and admiration of their King.

Jordanians celebrated the occasion by singing and dancing in the streets to the rhythm of national songs, slaughtering sheep, and staging a 90-minute national show outside Amman participated by the security forces, school students as well as various public and private sector institutions.

As the King, Her Majesty Queen Noor, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and mem-

bers of the Royal Family watched from the podium, units of the Armed Forces and police department, more than 6,000 school-children and various folklore groups from all parts of the Kingdom unfolded a national show reflecting the progress of Jordan.

The ceremonies, attended by government leaders and officials, Parliament members, tribal leaders, political activists and businessmen, were launched with an emotional speech by a 104-old Jordanian who travelled with the late King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, the founder of the Kingdom, on his way to Amman from the Hijaz in 1921.

"Seventy-two years ago, I came with King Abdullah to Amman where tribal leaders and sheikhs from all governorates and

from different sects pledged loyalty and allegiance to the (Hashemite) throne," Sheikh Juweiber Al Otaibi recalled.

Speaking with obvious difficulty, Sheikh Otaibi paid tribute to the progress Jordan has achieved under the Hashemite leadership.

Earlier, the master of ceremonies, Major-General Tahsin Shurdom, praised the strenuous efforts exerted by the King to achieve stability and prosperity in the country.

"From various origins and from different sects, in mosques and in churches, all pray for you King Hussein," he said. "In spite of the difficulties and scarcity of resources, you have continued to work to achieve the best for the nation with wisdom and courage," Maj.-Gen. Shurdom said.

The show, held at a sprawling parade ground near Marka, was held against the backdrop of students changing flashings of national slogans and pictures of the Hashemite Kings, reflecting the Jordanians' belief and conviction in the continuity of the Hashemite Monarchy.

While one group of students displayed the slogan "Forever Hashemite," another group formed the pictures of King Abdullah, King Talal, King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan, the designated successor to the Throne.

King Hussein was proclaimed monarch on August 11, 1952, when he was 17 years old after his grandfather was assassinated. But he assumed his constitutional powers on May 2, 1953.

The immense popularity of King Hussein, who led Jordan through some of the most difficult times in history, surged to new bounds especially after he launched the democratisation of Jordan in 1989 and stood firm on his nationalist positions during the Gulf crisis in 1991.

Nearly one million people thronged the streets of Amman in an unprecedented show of affection for the King when he returned home in September last year after undergoing successful surgery in the United States.

Although nowhere near in number of that occasion, Sunday's celebrations, titled "With Hussein on the Path of Democracy, Liberty and Development," were equally impressive in terms of the diversity of the show at

Marka.

Bedouin warriors in their traditional robes riding horses and camels staged a show commemorating the Great Arab Revolt that was led by the Hashemites in 1916.

Representing the various institutions, companies and ministries in Jordan, trucks and tractors transformed into fancy-moving colourful vehicles staged a march past, displaying the various achievements of the private and public sectors realised during the 40-year reign of King Hussein.

Armed Forces units simulated combat, while Air Force planes dropped parachutists and the Royal Falcons, Jordan's Aerebi-

(Continued on page 5)

International media see King Hussein as Great survivor against all odds... and firm believer in democracy

By Ed Blanche
The Associated Press

AMMAN — King Hussein, the Arab World's longest-serving ruler, marked his 40th year on the Hashemite throne Sunday, a unique survivor of Middle East tempests.

The 57-year-old monarch's longevity in the cutthroat politics of the region is remarkable. When he was crowned May 2, 1953, the boy-king of an impoverished desert state, few believed he would last long in the Middle Eastern cauldron.

He has survived countless assassination attempts, a Palestinian attempt to oust him, Arab-Israeli wars and political confrontations.

When King Hussein returned last September from the United States after surgery for cancer, more than one million people, a quarter of the population, packed Amman's streets in an ecstatic welcome.

The King's illness has raised nagging doubts about his health and with it the future of the Hashemite dynasty and Jordan's hard-won stability.

King Hussein himself has raised intimations of his own mortality. But in an AP interview on Thursday, he appeared in good health, if slightly weary after a hectic day of meetings. He still smokes.

Sitting in an ornate, chandeliered audience room in Basman Palace, its sandstone walls blind-

ing white in the spring sunshine, the King looked back on his turbulent reign with his usual disconcerting habit of calling his interviewers "Sir."

"There have been many happy memories, and many sad and terrible, tragic ones," he said.

Among them the death of Queen Alia, third of his four wives, in a helicopter crash in 1977 and his decision to join Egypt in a disastrous military alliance only days before the 1967 Arab-Israeli war broke out.

That cost him the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the city that is a potent religious symbol for his monarchy and for his dynasty that traces its line back to Fatima,

By Jane Arraf
Reuters

AMMAN — King Hussein, who celebrated his 40th anniversary on the throne Sunday, has faced war and forged a nation. Perhaps his biggest challenge though will be teaching his people to live without him.

In a vulnerable kingdom buffeted by the Arab-Israeli conflict and surrounded by powerful neighbours, the monarch has become convinced that democracy is the only way to ensure stability and the rule of his Hashemite dynasty, analysts said.

To do that, he must convince a largely adoring population to invest in building political foundations that will outlast him.

"The duties I have are such to prepare the ground for a more stable, progressive Jordan in the future and to make whatever decisions I deem right at that time and see how it goes," the King told Reuters in an interview this week when asked if he would possibly step down.

A prince jolted out of boyhood to reluctantly become king, he has enjoyed the longest reign of any leader in the turbulent Middle East.

Now at 57, some say the King feels a greater urgency to lay foundations for a future without him after undergoing cancer surgery last year.

Doctors found no trace of the cancer in his last check-up but the King still suffers from fatigue.

Those close to him are convinced his sense of destiny and duty will keep him on the throne as long as his health allows.

But he has occasionally talked of handing over power and has begun to tell his subjects, many of whom see him as a father figure, that sooner or later they will have to do without him and shape their own future.

King Hussein has made clear he still intends his brother Crown Prince Hassan, respected for his intellect, to succeed him.

"My biggest achievement has been to give the people of Jordan, regardless of their origin... what is their right, sharing and shaping in their future and democracy."

(Continued on page 5)

King consoles Sri Lanka

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday sent a cable of condolences to acting Sri Lankan President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, expressing deep sorrow and regret over the assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa. (see page 8).

OIC not planning PLO's removal

DUBAI (R) — The 51-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was not considering the removal of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) from its governing council, as reported by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, OIC sources said Sunday. The sources at OIC headquarters in Jeddah said the four-year term of a Palestinian who had the post of assistant secretary general dealing with the Palestinian issue and Jerusalem had expired and a replacement is yet to be named. They said Islamic foreign ministers meeting in Karachi last week had, at the PLO's request, set up a five-member committee to consider ways of increasing Palestinian representation on OIC organs. The OIC did not have a governing council and was looking into more rather than less Palestinian representation, they added.

Hariri takes aid mission to Bahrain

MANAMA (AFP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri arrived in Bahrain Sunday, the second leg of a Gulf tour aimed at securing reconstruction aid for his war-battered country, officials here said. On Saturday, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) pledged support for post-war reconstruction in Lebanon during a visit there by Mr. Hariri.

Clinton hails Athens accord on Bosnia

ROME (R) — President Bill Clinton Sunday hailed a decision by Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic in Athens to sign an accord to end the Bosnian civil war as a "first result of the firm line adopted by the international community," an Italian government statement said. Mr. Clinton told Italian Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi that the international community's hard line on the Bosnian conflict might need to be reinforced through further measures, the statement added (see related story on page 8).

King lauds Yemeni polls, pays tribute to leadership

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday sent a cable to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh congratulating him on the success of legislative elections held in Yemen late last month. "It is a source of delight and pride for me to send you in my own name and on behalf of Jordan's people and government, our sincerest congratulations on Yemen's democratic achievements," the King said.

"Yemen's free elections embody the democratic march which is based on political and intellectual pluralism," he said. "Yemen's successful elections were foundation stone in the long sought Arab democratic march."

King Hussein praised the leadership of President Saleh, saying that the Yemeni leadership had played "a historic role in laying down the foundations of unity and democracy in Yemen."

Later Sunday King Hussein telephoned President Saleh, to personally congratulate him and wish him continued good health and happiness, and the Yemeni people further progress and prosperity.

President Saleh congratulated the King on the 40th anniversary

of the assumption of his constitutional powers.

King Hussein and President Saleh also exchanged views on issues of common interest and means of enhancing democracy, freedom and human rights, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

YSP accepts tally

The Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) Sunday announced it accepted the results of the country's first multi-party parliamentary election despite charges of voting irregularities from some party members, reports from Sanaa said.

A spokesman for the party, which has shared power with the General People's Congress of President Saleh since North and South Yemen here were joined in May 1990, described Tuesday's elections as a "victory for democracy and the people" of Yemen.

Some YSP members had charged voting irregularities and filed protests with Yemen's supreme court.

According to the country's

(Continued on page 5)

Arafat hails return of 30 exiles as first step

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat told a rally celebrating the return of a group of veteran exiles in the West Bank town of Nablus Sunday that a Palestinian state was around the corner.

"Today we are on the political map. Tomorrow we will be on the geographical map," eyewitnesses quoted Mr. Arafat as saying in a telephone call from his Tunis headquarters that was wired into a loudspeaker.

In his 40-minute speech, Mr. Arafat emphasised that the return of 15 long-term exiles Friday, with a further 15 expected Monday, was one of the fruits of the peace negotiations now in their ninth round in Washington.

He also extended greetings to about 400 adherents of the Islamic group Hamas exiled in December and stuck in South Lebanon. Mr. Arafat has addressed a few rallies in the past, including a similar gathering in Ramallah on Friday.

Hamas supporters at the rally attacked the return of the 30 as an underhanded deal. All those allowed back were mostly older activists exiled between Israel's seizure of the occupied territories in 1967 and 1987, when the Palestinians started a violent uprising against Israeli rule.

Hamas supporters accused the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) of selling out on the demand that the peace talks be postponed until their activists stuck at the border village of Marj Al Zohour were allowed home.

"This celebration is an attempt to black out the cause of the deportees in Marj Al Zohour," a Hamas activist shouted into the loudspeaker at Al Najah university before Mr. Arafat spoke.

The Israeli government said it allowed the 30 back as a gesture for the peace talks, while their opposition accused them of fuelling unreal expectations of the right of return for all Palestinians.

"The return of 30 Palestinian leaders is only one small step before the return of four million," said on poster at the rally.

East Jerusalemites could vote on autonomy with conditions

U.S. to keep Palestinians informed on settlements

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinians from Arab East Jerusalem will be allowed to vote in West Bank elections for self-government but will be barred from running as candidates, the Haaretz newspaper reported Sunday.

Haaretz said that the agreement came during background talks with the United States at peace talks in Washington.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's office denied the report. But the minister of energy, Amnon Rubinstein of the left-wing Meretz Party, said letting the East Jerusalem Palestinians vote reflects the position of both the ruling Labour Party and of Meretz, constituting a government majority.

"I have no doubt that this will be the final result if the negotiations are successful," he told the Associated Press during a pause in the weekly cabinet meeting.

Haaretz quoted a high-level Israeli official as saying American intervention brought Israel to

accept this compromise, as well as the idea of international supervision of the elections in the occupied territories.

In the past, Israel insisted that its own military oversee the ballot boxes, but the Palestinians opposed it.

The status of Jerusalem is one of the most delicate issues in the peace talks focusing on Palestinian autonomy.

The preclusion of 150,000 Palestinians from East Jerusalem in either voting or running might undermine support for any autonomy plan. That would eliminate candidates such as Faisal Husseini, head of the Palestinian delegation.

Mr. Rubinstein insisted that before Israelis and Palestinians can reach the stage of peace and open borders, they must live separately for an interim period.

He was referring to the closure Israel imposed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip one month ago.

According to sources quoted by AFP, Israel would impose

three conditions: East Jerusalem will not be represented on the council, only East Jerusalem Palestinians with a second address in the occupied territories can stand for elections and voting stations must be set up outside the Jerusalem boundaries.

The elections will be for a council to be established in the framework of the autonomy period, after three years of which talks start to settle the final status of the occupied territories.

Ex-premier Yitzhak Shamir, who lost general elections last June, refused to consider any vote for East Jerusalemites.

Differences over the voting rights of Palestinians from East Jerusalem led to the collapse of the Likud-Labour government in March 1990. Labour backed the vote for East Jerusalemites in line with the same three conditions above.

Moshe Katzav, head of the right-wing Likud parliamentary

(Continued on page 5)

Suicide of Beregovoy stuns French political world

PARIS (Agencies) — The French political world was in a state of shock Sunday following the suicide Saturday of former Socialist Prime Minister Pierre Beregovoy, and speculation was rife about the reasons behind his desperate act.

Mr. Beregovoy, 67, shot himself in the head at Nevers, central France, and died a few hours later aboard a helicopter while being flown to the elite Val de Grace military hospital in Paris.

Consternation was felt right across the political spectrum over his totally unexpected and unprecedented act.

Prime Minister Edouard Balladur said Sunday he would postpone two government decisions on France's finances and recovery out of respect for the death of his predecessor.

Several leading Socialists lost no time in denouncing attacks that had been made against Mr. Bere-



Pierre Beregovoy

govoy, both political and personal, that they said were behind his suicide.

Political friends said Mr. Beregovoy, who had announced a drive against corruption when he came to power in April last year, had been deeply wounded by

allegations of impropriety over an interest-free loan he took from a businessman friend to buy a flat seven years ago.

Harsh attacks on his government's economic record and the Socialist's disarray following their humiliating election rout to the centre-right a month ago had added to his distress although he retained his seat in the National Assembly.

The newspaper Journal du Dimanche said his suicide was a Shakespearean tragedy about men and power.

"Pierre Beregovoy's death has stirred deep emotion in our country," Mr. Balladur said.

He delayed for several days his economic recovery programme which was due to be announced on Wednesday. A report expected to be sharply critical of the large public deficits left by Mr. Beregovoy's one-year-long gov-

(Continued on page 5)

U.S. said planning to offer aid to Palestinians

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — An Arab member of Israeli parliament said Sunday the Clinton administration was preparing a broad aid plan for Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Abdul Wahab Darawshe said on return from the United States that National Security Council aide Martin Indyk told him the administration planned to offer \$24 million in immediate aid for the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, sealed off by Israel for more than a month.

"But he is preparing a more comprehensive plan with the participation of Western European countries. Gulf states, and the Israeli administration for larger aid to residents of the territories in investment, industrial and job development," said Mr. Darawshe, leader of the Democratic Arab Party.

He told Israel Radio the plan would be brought to the next round of multilateral Middle East peace talks on economic development in Rome this week.

Mr. Darawshe quoted Mr. Indyk as saying the closure was a "time bomb" for which an alternative would have to be found. The ban on entering Israel, prompted by a surge in violence, has kept about 120,000 Palestinian workers from low-paying jobs.

"It said this situation is dangerous not only for Israel and the Palestinians, but also for the interests of the United States and the Arab countries in the region. So the present situation cannot continue and alternatives must be found for employment and development," Mr. Darawshe said.

Israeli military figures have warned the indefinite closure had created a "pressure cooker" stirring frustration and rage among the nearly two million Arabs of the territories.

Energy Minister Amnon Rubenstein said Israel's cabinet decided Sunday to allow entry of 33,000 Palestinian workers with families. Israeli agriculture and construction have been hit hard by the loss of West Bank and Gaza Labourers.

Israel Radio said the closure otherwise remained in effect.

55% of drivers were in road accidents, says Petra survey

AMMAN (Petra) — A recent survey conducted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, revealed that 55 per cent of motorists in Jordan have at one time or another been involved in road accidents.

Questionnaires which sought to determine whether or not motorists abide by traffic regulations and speed limits were distributed to 300 licensed drivers in the Amman area and other governorates.

The average age of motorists involved in the survey was 37. Eighty-six per cent of those questioned were males.

Motorists holding private driving licences accounted for 66.7 per cent of the total number of drivers surveyed.

The study revealed that 47.4 per cent of sample have held driving licences for 10 or more years.

The results of the survey showed that nearly 45 per cent of those fined for violating traffic rules were guilty of exceeding speed limit.

More than 52 per cent of the

motorists questioned said that occasional campaigns by the traffic department to encourage drivers to abide by regulations were useful and effective sometimes, but not always; nearly 11 per cent of those fined for violations had filed complaints against the traffic police for various reasons; and about 30 per cent of them said that the behaviour of traffic police was entirely unacceptable.

At least 29 per cent of the sample said their licences were temporarily revoked at least once last year.

About 12 per cent of the respondents criticised the traffic police for failing to apply rules on all motorists equally and demanded that police officers set a good example of "the man of the law."

They also demanded that the police show more understanding in cases of emergency and not fine drivers of public cars taking their families on outings.

Some taxi drivers demanded raising the current fare complaining that it was insufficient and did not help cover operational costs.

Political parties seek wider social security

AMMAN (J.T.) — A committee representing Jordanian political parties Sunday issued a statement demanding that the government expand the scope of the Social Security Law to include the widest possible sector of the Jordanian people.

The statement called for more care of women and their needs, and more attention to the rehabilitation and employment of handicapped persons.

The statement, which the parties said was issued to mark this year's Labour Day, paid tribute to the workers' relentless efforts in reconstruction and development.

While Iraqi funds remain frozen, thousands of Iraqis are dying due to lack of proper medical attention and food, said the statement.

It said now that the Iraqi government has accepted and complied with all United Nations resolutions, the time has come for lifting the sanctions.

Specialists to review environmental strategies

AMMAN (J.T.) — The German Friedrich Naumann Stiftung Foundation is organising a three-day conference entitled "Pre-conditions and Requirements of Successful Environmental Policies in the Arab World," to be held at Yarmouk University on May 3.

A foundation statement said that 22 Arab and European environmentalists and scientists will participate and deliver papers, and 17 scholars from Jordan in addition to a large number of concerned individuals will attend the conference.

The statement said the conference, which is being held in cooperation with Yarmouk University and the Jordan Society for the Control of Environmental Pollution (JSCEP), will hear an opening speech by JSCEP President Ahmad Obeidat, who will present a working paper entitled "Towards a Regional Strategy for Environmental Protection in the Arab World."

Other papers will cover: the possibility of a market economy to contribute to sustainable development; detection of water leakage from dams; characterisation of Saharan dust, erosion as an environmental hazard in low lands; the impact of road construction on the environment; environmental pollution in Arab cities; environmental legislations in Jordan; protection of natural environmental resources; pesticides concentration and the actual state of the atmosphere among others.

MAP marchers gear up for 15 km sponsored walk

By Elia Naswallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian chapter of the London-based MAP (Medical Aid for Palestinians) plans to hold its annual sponsored walk on the outskirts of Amman and to date has registered 5,000 participants in the 15-kilometre walk scheduled for May 14.



Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan led the 1991 MAP march in Amman (Petra photo)

MAP Jordan chapter Director Nadia Alami told the Jordan Times Sunday that at least four banks and several major institutions are backing the fund-raising walk by setting up refreshment along the marchers' route and providing shirts and caps for the walkers.

Representatives of the foreign diplomatic corps in Jordan, including the embassies of France, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, have also registered for the walk which will kick off from the Baccalaureate School in Fuhis area, wind through Fuhis and Sweileh towns and end at the Nazeq Al Hariri Centre, Ms. Alami said.

"We have so far registered participants from banks, embassies and companies, but this week we will register other citizens, and we hope the number will reach 8,000 to 10,000," she said.

MAP President Lord Ian Gilmer and Board Chairman David Walton will take part in the sponsored walk which will be held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Honorary President of the Jordanian chapter, Ms. Alami added.

Founded in 1990, MAP directs its attention mainly towards helping the Palestinians under occupation, but in 1991 the organisation opened a health centre at Hittin refugee camp in Marka, east of Amman. The JD 65,000 centre includes four clinics which offer dental and general examination services, a laboratory and an X-ray unit.

In 1992, Ms. Alami said, 18,000 people benefitted from the centre's services against 6,500 in 1991.

Working in collaboration with other non-governmental organisations and the Foreign Ministry's Palestinian Affairs Department, MAP now plans to open another health centre at the C refugee camp near Jerash, north of Amman, Ms. Alami reported.

The Jordan chapter also said a charity bazaar offering marchers and visitors an assortment of handicrafts, embroidery and many items will be held at the Nazeq Al Hariri Centre.

The bazaar will precede the walk (around 11 a.m.) and proceeds from sales will go to benefit the medical program for the Palestinian refugees, added.

Ms. Alami said MAP shares caps for the walkers are on for JD 5 a set.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Queen to deliver keynote address at population conference

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor today will deliver the keynote address at a conference on "Population Change and Developmental Policies," sponsored by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan. More than 16 papers will be presented covering areas that relate to Jordan's population composition and foreign policy, population composition and democracy, population change and the environment, and population change and national security. The two-day conference is being held at the auditorium of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology at the university.

Princess Wijdan opens theatre festival

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday, Princess Wijdan Ali opened the second Theatre Festival of the Jordanian Youth, which was held at the Royal Cultural Centre. The festival, which runs until May 18, is held to mark Jordan's celebration of His Majesty King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers. The opening ceremony was attended by Her Highness Princess Nafaa and Princess Rajwa Ali.

Belgian trade minister arrives for talks

AMMAN (Petra) — The Belgian External Trade Minister Robert Urbain Sunday arrived here on a several day official visit to Jordan, during which he will chair the Belgian side to the joint Jordanian-Belgian Committee meetings which start here today. The Belgian minister will hold talks with his Jordanian counterpart Abdullah Ensour and senior Jordanian officials on scopes of cooperation between Jordan and Belgium in various fields.

Pharmaceutical conference begins at JUST

IRBID (J.T.) — The first International Middle East Conference on Pharmaceutical Sciences will be held here today, according to Naji Najib, dean of the pharmaceutical faculty of the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST). Dr. Najib said the three-day conference aims to review contemporary scientific developments in the fast-growing areas of pharmaceutical sciences. Taking part in the conference will be renowned international experts who made outstanding contributions in the field of pharmaceutical education and research. Dr. Najib, a member of the organising committee, said the panel received abstracts of scientific papers on original research done in the areas of pharmaceutical technology, chemistry, pharmaceutical analysis and pharmacognosy, phytochemistry, biopharmaceutics, and pharmacokinetics. The papers also cover clinical and hospital pharmacy, pharmacology, therapeutic and pharmaceutical education.

Japanese poster exhibit to open


AMMAN (J.T.) — A week-long exhibition of "Contemporary Japanese Posters" will be opened Wednesday at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC). The exhibition, organised by the Japanese embassy in cooperation with the Japan Foundation and the RCC, includes works by 15 famous Japanese artists who have been chosen for their strong consciousness of the poster as a social art, according to an embassy press release. The embassy said Japanese posters date back to hundreds of years ago when they were used as official notices. In the 19th century, the release said, posters in Japan developed from being a means of conveying information to an effective advertising medium.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition entitled "The Legend of Petra II" by artist Suha Shoman at the National Gallery for Fine Arts.
- ★ Art exhibition by Samia Al Zura and Adnan Yahya at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of ceramics by Margaret Tadros at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artist Ahmad Nawash at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of sculptures by Syrian artist Akhann Abdul Hameed at Baladna Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by Syrian Artist Yousef Abdelke at Al Balqa'a Gallery, Al Fuhis city.
- ★ Art exhibition entitled "Fragments: Weavings and Works on Paper" by Kevin A. Eluch and Margaret M. Eluch at the American Centre.
- ★ Save the Children Designer Showcase: Exhibition of rugs, quilts, cushions, wallhangings, picture frames, lamp shades, leather handbags, canvas tote bags, natural olive oil soap, collector's dolls, food, embroidered fashionwear, baskets and sewing; all manufactured by the Beni Hamida and the Jordan River Designs projects. The exhibition is at a new building next to the Business Bank, between Mukhabarat Bridge and the Prime Ministry (4th Circle), Queen Noor Street.



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SCHEDULE

CITY	HOTEL	EXHIBITION	FOLLOW UP
DUBAI	HOTEL HAYAT REGENCY	2-5-93	6-5-93
AMMAN	HOTEL AMRA	6-5-93 & 7-5-93	8-5-93
BEIRUT	HOTEL BRISTOL	10-5-93 & 11-5-93	12-5-93

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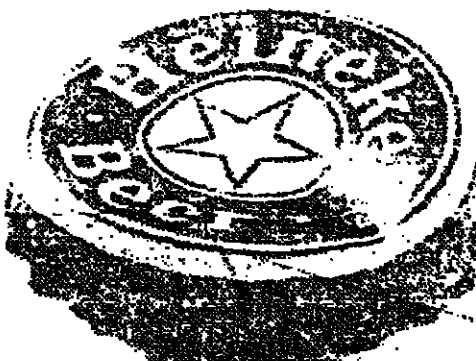
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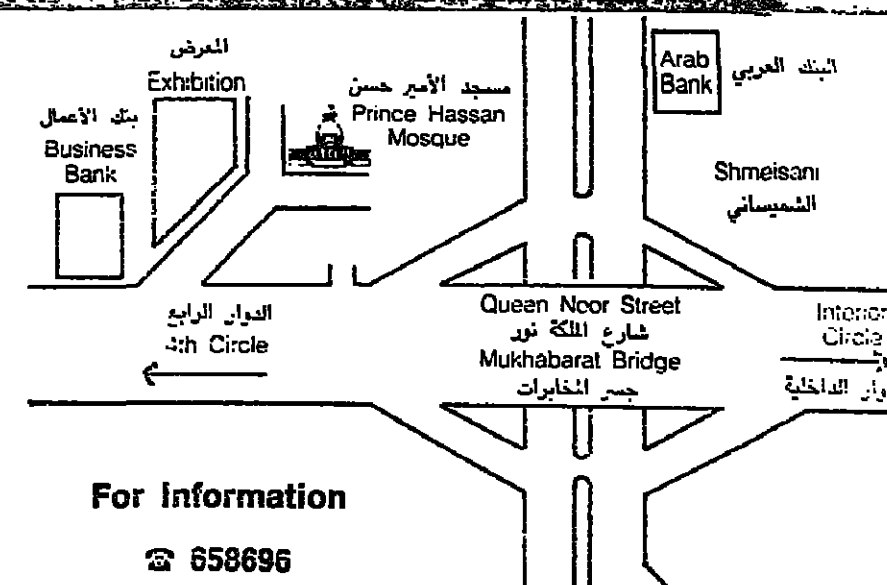
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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
AHMOUD AL KAYED

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DEAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

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Weekly Political Pulse

Efforts, concessions needed to keep momentum of talks

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi described the ongoing peace talks in Washington between the Palestinian and the Israeli delegations as having effectively entered a "qualitatively different phase."

"This is really the beginning," Ashrawi added at the conclusion of the Friday session marking the end of the first week of peace talks. Palestinians attribute the new peace thrust to new Israeli attitudes and to the more active U.S. involvement in the peace negotiations.

Having attained this new sense of direction in the bilateral peace parleys, it is incumbent on all parties to maintain the momentum generated by the new spirit dominating now in the Washington talks. Israel has made several significant moves, albeit ones that by and large rectify long-standing blunders. Nevertheless, the fact that the Rabin government has taken these corrective measures should develop a need to nurture them. There will come a time when the Palestinian side will be asked to respond in-kind, or at least partially in-kind, even though what the Palestinians may be called upon to concede would be some of their legitimate rights to wage an armed intifada. In other words, as a quid pro quo for the Israeli rectification of past and

continuing violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Palestinians will probably end up being asked to stop or decrease the tempo of their uprising, something that is not called for by international law or human rights treaties.

Still, for political reasons, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) may very well see it as in their interest and as serving the cause of peace to yield on this score as well by offering some positive gestures in response to the latest Israeli confidence-building measures (CBM). The Palestinian side has several options in this regard, most of which would not irrevocably hurt the intifada or render their bargaining position weaker. The Palestinians have a stake in keeping alive the so-called "qualitatively different phase," that the bilateral talks have reached at the end of the first week of peace negotiations. The Palestinians also have a stake in promoting additional Israeli moves that hopefully will include the 400 Palestinian deportees.

Even more significant is the cultivation of a new climate that could produce more substantive results for the Palestinians. No doubt, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher would be pushing for some kind or another of Palestinian response as a condition for applying continuous pressure on the Rabin govern-

ment. But as long as the case of the 400 Palestinian expellees is not resolved, the PLO would have difficulties introducing CBMs of its own. That is why the implementation of the early resolution on the banished Palestinians is a must if for no other reason than to strengthen the hand of the Palestinian moderates.

There is a potential agreement to create three working groups, one of which will deal with the issue of land. This is a big breakthrough in itself since never before has Israel accepted to even touch upon the issue of Palestinian rights to their territories. This is an added reason why the PLO has a vested interest in keeping the balance of power in Israel in favour of the Labour Party. The Palestinians are not likely to receive these kinds of concessions from any Likud-formed government.

All in all, therefore, the talks between Israel and the PLO have indeed entered a new threshold. Any Palestinian investment in this new stage of peace talks would be more than worth it. It takes courage to come up with Palestinian CBMs, but the PLO cannot afford not to have the necessary strength of conviction to promote the continuation of the good start registered during the first week of the resumed ninth session of the bilateral talks.

By Waleed Sadi

Paper tiger at Karachi

BASED ON the deliberations and decisions by the conference of the foreign ministers of the member governments of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Karachi, the only answer to the question "Is the Islamic World a paper tiger?" is, "yes, it is a paper tiger." That slings should feel angry and indignant at what is being done to Muslims in many trouble spots is obvious truism and the conference did express anger and indignation. But when it came to taking action to stop harm being done to Muslim brothers, the conference lapsed into mere generalities. On Kashmir, for instance, the conference merely asked member states "to take necessary steps" to stop abuses being committed. On Bosnia, the conference asked someone else, the U.N. or the Western powers, to do something that it would not itself do. The one old power, the U.S., and the West, especially Britain and France, do not want an independent Bosnia to be taken on Bosnia, least of all any independent Muslim action, so there is not going to be any action.

In fact on Bosnia, the OIC took a step backwards because at its last conference in December, the OIC hinted that if the UN embargo on Bosnia were not lifted by the end of Jan. 15, the organisation's members would act on their own to send arms to Bosnia. It was an empty threat — because of enormous logistical obstacles — but there was not even an empty threat this time. Yet it can be said that this is an improvement because the OIC is, at least, being honest with itself and the rest of the world; and that is not an inconsiderable achievement for the 21st conference. At that meeting, the organisation accepted the fact that it can talk but it cannot do anything. In other words, individual Muslim countries can act sometimes but not the grouping of the governments of the world's one billion Muslims. And that is a major factor in world politics, of which it may take time for the rest of the world to become aware, simply because the international media virtually ignored what went on in Karachi.

By Laurence McQuillan
Reuters

WASHINGTON — In his first three months as president, Bill Clinton has shown he likes to think before he speaks, enjoys performing for television cameras and refuses to worry about being on time.

At 46, Mr. Clinton is the third-youngest president in U.S. history after Theodore Roosevelt and John Kennedy. With calculated planning he has developed a charismatic style that excites crowds and works well on TV.

Virtually every time he answers a question, this president pauses to formulate and answer — in sharp contrast to former President George Bush's tendency to blurt out responses in a fractured syntax he then tried to fix as he spoke.

Take the second day of Clinton's presidency. At an Oval Office photo session, he was asked about lifting the ban on homosexuals in the military and did not respond. Ten minutes later he went looking for the questioner, to provide a considered response that dominated television news that night.

Not only does Mr. Clinton think before he speaks, he thinks before he acts — prompting some critics to say he takes too long to decide on action.

Clinton likes informal consultation sessions to thrash out a pending decision or discuss what was right or wrong about a strategy. "The seat of power has moved from the cabinet room to the Roosevelt Room," said a senior administration official who attends most such sessions.

The cabinet room is small, filled with a large table and tall leather chairs. The Roosevelt Room, just down the hall and named for a painting of Teddy Roosevelt on horseback on the walls, offers an informal setting for more people.

"He likes to take in everyone's ideas," said one White House official. "Then he goes back to his office and mulls it over before deciding."

Last Friday, mindful of pending media assessments of his first 100 days in office — the 100th day will be today — Mr. Clinton joined about two dozen aides in the Roosevelt Room.

"It was more of an inventory of ongoing initiatives," said White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers. "Although there was some discussion... about what lessons can we learn in a constructive way about the last 100 days."

For his day-to-day work, Mr. Clinton uses the Oval Office and an adjacent study, but has a private office in the White House family quarters so he can work at any hour.

Aides say he does not need much sleep, rarely more than five or six hours a night. But when he pushes too hard, circles appear under his eyes and aides suggest he get some rest.

Mr. Clinton is the first president to be shaped by television as a child and now he is trying to use it to shape the way others view him. His family bought its first TV set in 1956, when he was a nine-year-old.

It arrived in time for him to watch his hero, John Kennedy, in his unsuccessful bid to become the Democratic vice-presidential nominee at that year's nominating convention.

On his way to the White House, Mr. Clinton made numerous television guest appearances, including a saxophone-playing stint on the "Arsenio Hall" late night show and several visits to MTV, the rock video cable channel.

Not surprisingly then, he takes to the airwaves frequently as president, convinced he can court Americans better if he can talk to them directly.

He jokingly told reporters: "I

don't need you people, I've got Larry King," the television talk show host.

Perhaps the biggest change in the White House as it moved to Mr. Clinton from Mr. Bush has been time itself.

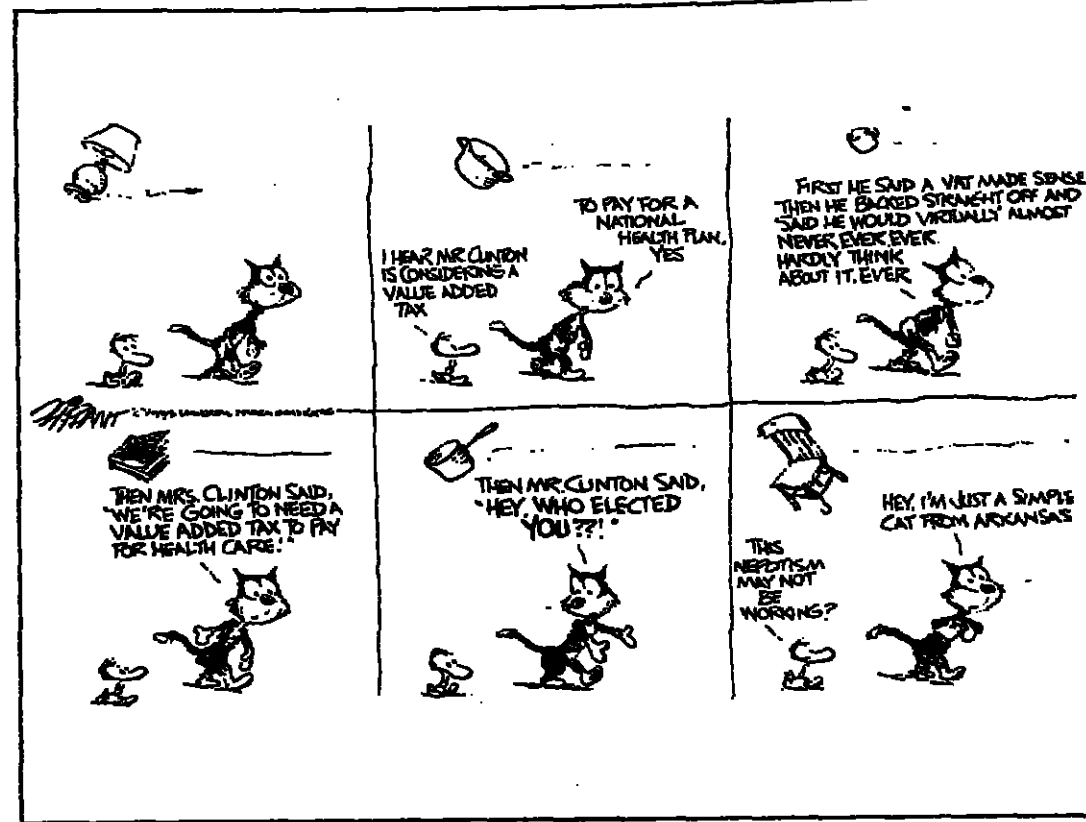
The president does sport a wristwatch — but many assume it is purely ornamental.

He was punctual when he took the oath of office at noon on Jan. 20 as prescribed by law. But since then he has lived by "Clinton time," which generally means no one really knows when he'll show up for scheduled events.

Examples of presidential tardiness are numerous.

He was two hours late for a White House reception to honour the creators of the U.S. Holocaust Museum and 13 minutes late for his father-in-law's funeral in Scranton, PA.

Those around him have become philosophical about Mr. Clinton's attitude towards time. "He gets really involved and focused on what he's doing," says Ms. Myers. "He's not the kind of guy who keeps looking at his watch."



LETTERS

40 years of achievements

To the Editor:

It happened exactly four years ago. Yet I remember this special occasion as if it were yesterday.

His Majesty King Hussein was paying a visit to the Jordan Press Foundation and I was among the JPF family members to greet His Majesty.

His Majesty arrived at about 7 in the evening at the Al Ra'i building and all hurried to see and congratulate him. The editorial board members greeted the King and led his way to the editorial room. Unfortunately, I had barely had time to have a glimpse of him. I was really disappointed and frustrated.

Ten minutes later, His Majesty came back. This time I had made my mind up: at any cost I will shake hands with His Majesty. With this in mind I rushed to the front line. The King shook hands with many people and, at last, I got the wished-for opportunity to shake hands with one of the wisest peace-loving leaders in the world. It was a moment I will always cherish and about which I will always talk with pride.

Since I landed at Marka Airport 12 years ago I witnessed tremendous progress in Jordan. Every day changes were taking place, in all aspects of life in the country: universities, sports facilities, hospitals, industrial estates, vocational centres, tourist places, airports, to mention just some, were springing up.

I also witnessed the economic recession of 1989 and the wave of returnees in the wake of the Gulf war. Under all these difficult circumstances Jordan managed to raise its flag high, with all its limited resources.

Even though I belong to one of the biggest Third World countries, I envy Jordan's accomplishments. Almost all facilities are available for the development of the human being in the Kingdom.

How were all these achieved?

There is no doubt in my mind now. I am fully aware that all the progress is entirely due to the wise guidance of His Majesty the King.

On this 40th anniversary of assuming his constitutional power, I pray to the Almighty to bless this peace-loving, wise leader with a long, long life, to enable him to lead this beautiful country and its wonderful people and keep it an oasis of peace.

Rajan Thonipurakal,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld all upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

JORDANIAN PAPERS Sunday discussed in their editorials the various achievements in Jordan under His Majesty King Hussein's rule over the past four decades. The four decades of the King's rule, which are celebrated today by the Jordanian people, have been full of accomplishments at all levels and in all domains, from the daily life of the Kingdom's progress has been achieved in the fields of health, education, agriculture, social development, economy and above all in bolstering the nation's pride through the strengthening of the Jordanian Armed Forces, said Al Ra'i. The paper said that King Hussein has not only enabled the countrymen to protect the gains and achievements. Perhaps Jordan's option for democracy and political reform was the major achievement of Jordan under King Hussein, enabling the country to serve as a model for other Arab states, said the daily. The Jordanian people have reason to be proud of the progress achieved over the past 40 years and are proud at the anniversary which reminds them of the King's favours and his success in serving his nation, the paper added. On the anniversary of King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers stands out as one of the most cherished memories to be commemorated by the Jordanian people who in their leader continued health and happiness and success in leadership of his country and nation.

MODERATION in pan-Arab and international policies are intrinsic characters of King Hussein who has just completed four decades of rule in Jordan, said columnist Taher Al Udwan in Al Hour. The writer said that moderate as he is in handling internal, pan-Arab and international affairs, King Hussein is also an unrelenting in matters requiring quick action and when matters concern higher national interest. Despite the meagre resources of the Kingdom, King Hussein has succeeded in transforming it into a modern state through his diligence and his great efforts, said the writer. He recalled the King's stand during the Gulf war. The Arab-Israeli conflict has various crises that plagued the Arab Nation over the past decades and noted that the Monarch has crowned all this by leading his countrymen along the path of democracy and political reform and towards respect for human rights — things that lack many parts of the Arab World. The writer said that all political parties — leftists or conservatives alike — are in agreement about the absolute support for the King's wise leadership and stance.

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شازوكا

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Japan opening Saudi office to boost investment in Gulf

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Japan is opening an office in Saudi Arabia to boost investment in the oil-rich Gulf, Japanese officials have said.

The Japan International Development Organisation, a semi-government group, will open the office in the Red Sea port of Jeddah in June to deal with oil, gas and other industrial sectors, Japanese officials said.

"We believe it will contribute to promoting investment in Saudi Arabia," Shinji Okakura, economic director at the Japanese embassy in Riyadh told AFP by telephone.

"The office will concentrate on Saudi Arabia but in the near future it could expand its activities to all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states," he said.

Mr. Okakura said the Jeddah office was the first of its kind in the Gulf.

"Saudi Arabia is an important country in the region. It has a vast market and it is one of the largest oil suppliers to Japan," he said, explaining why Saudi Arabia was chosen.

"The office will also help strengthen relations between the

two countries," he said.

Japan is already among the main investors in the six-nation GCC, with assets of about \$3.5 billion mainly in the oil and gas industries. Around \$1.5 billion in direct investments are in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — the six GCC members — are Japan's main crude oil suppliers, exporting about 2.7 million barrels per day (b/d) to Japan last year.

Japan's total oil imports stood at around 4.1 million b/d. The two traded \$35 billion worth of goods, making Japan the GCC's biggest single economic partner.

Saudi Arabia meanwhile is Japan's biggest Gulf trade partner, with an exchange of \$15 billion in 1992, according to the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO).

Japan has sought to boost relations with GCC countries in a bid to ensure stable crude supplies as it expects to rely more on Gulf oil. It sent an oil delegation to the UAE this year and plans more

missions to other GCC members.

In turn, GCC states have been negotiating with Japan and other industrial countries to obtain technology through joint projects and attempts to expand their industries and lessen reliance on oil.

The Japanese ambassador in Riyadh, Hiroshi Ota, said in the Gulf press last month that four joint projects would be negotiated with Saudi Arabia, including one with the giant Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC).

A joint feasibility study is also underway to set up an oil refinery in Japan with a production capacity of 450,000 b/d, nearly 10 per cent to Japan's refining output.

He said the refining project was discussed between Japanese officials and Saudi Oil Minister Hisham Nazer in January last year.

"Although the amount of investment and the cost for this joint venture have not been earmarked, both countries understand that Japan will secure a more stable source of oil from Saudi Arabia as a result of this project," he said.

UAE opens region's first trade arbitration centre

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) the Gulf's main trade and commercial post, Saturday opened the region's first trade arbitration centre.

Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce officials said the Abu Dhabi Commercial Conciliation and Arbitration Centre (ADCCAC) provides a forum for international and local firms to settle trade disputes and avoid long and costly court battles.

"It is an edifice of justice of which we can be proud," Sheikh Sultan Bin Khalifa Al Nahayan, honorary chairman of the Chamber of Commerce said.

"We see it as a transitional move for finding amicable and just settlements for disputes," Chamber of Commerce President Alhaj Bin Abdullah Al Muhairby said in a speech read for him.

UAE legal sources said ADCCAC would relieve a backlog in the country's civil courts and lure Western business to the region.

It will apply UAE or other country's federal commercial laws to settle fraud cases, non-delivery of goods and other commercial disputes within six months unless the parties agree to extend the period.

The UAE, considered the barometer of Gulf trade with the highest number of foreign firms and foreign trade in the region, has been under pressure from its main Western business partners to speed resolution of business disagreements.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce in July last year said a lack of trade arbitration facilities hampers the business climate for Americans in the GCC — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar.

Air France announces \$605m loss

PARIS (AFP) — Air France Group suffered a consolidated loss of 3,266 billion francs (\$605 million) in 1992, the group has announced. That compared with losses of 685 million francs in 1991 and 717.2 million the previous year. The group said subsidiaries had broken even over all last year. It had indicated at the end of last year that it expected a sharply higher group loss for 1992, on the order of 3.2 billion francs. Air France said that the 1992 result included an exceptional provision of 723 million francs set aside in connection with group membership in the AGIRC-ARRCO system for supplementary retirement benefits for employees, "in the wake of the deterioration of the demographic balance" of the company's retirement fund for ground staff.

The sales of the group, consisting of the Air France-UTA and Air Inter airlines and of a number of subsidiaries (hotels, tourism, and related activities), dipped by 1.1 per cent last year, to 57.1 billion francs against 57.6 billion for 1991.

Third World economies told to go for private investment

WASHINGTON (AFP) — High-level finance officials from rich and poor countries Saturday urged developing countries to move ahead with economic reforms that would help attract increased private investment and offset scarcer official aid.

The Joint Development Committee of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank proposed a catalogue of policy actions by governments and international institutions to boost the number of countries targeted by overseas investors "as quickly as possible."

A "high level of investment in the private sector is important to sustainable economic growth in developing countries," including eastern Europe's economies in transition, the 24-nation panel said in a communique.

It stressed the "complementary" but "crucial" role of private foreign flows and official development assistance (ODA), and recognised that for poorer

countries and those at present unable to attract private capital, ODA remains "essential."

In the light of the recent stagnation of ODA flows, despite increased needs, the panel asked donor countries "to do their best to increase their aid as circumstances permit, particularly where it still falls short of 0.7 per cent of GNP."

The average ratio for the 22 top industrial donors at present is about 0.35 per cent, with the United States at less than 0.2 per cent of GNP, development officials attending the talks noted.

French Finance Minister Edmond Alphandery echoed the feelings of many Western ministers at the meeting when he stressed the budget problems facing many donor countries and called for increased recourse to private money.

"It would be illusory to rely primarily on bilateral contributors at this time," he said.

The committee strongly urged the donors to ratify without delay

the recent agreement to replenish the World Bank's soft-loan affiliate, the International Development Association (IDA), main source of external finance for the poorest nations.

It also asked the IMF to complete by next November its work on a successor to ESAF (Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility) which provides balance of payments support on soft terms for these countries.

The panel — composed of finance or development ministers of industrial and developing countries — said foreign direct investment (FDI) was "the most valuable form of private external finance."

It was associated with access to technical know-how, managerial expertise and wider markets in the West.

Against this background, it voiced "increasing concern" about the continued delays and "risk of breakdown" in the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations in Geneva.

A failure could entail "a downward spiral of increasing protectionism" and narrow the markets for goods from developing countries, reducing their incentive to liberalise their economies.

Although FDI in developing countries nearly doubled to around \$20 billion in the 1980s, private flows were concentrated in a small number of countries.

Nearly half went to Brazil, China, Hong Kong, Mexico and Singapore, and a dozen Latin American and East Asian countries accounted for about three-quarters of the total, financial experts said.

The committee recognised this, but told Third World governments at large to do what was needed to create conditions attractive to foreign investors, including a stable political climate, sound economic management and a "legal and institutional framework which encourages investment without discrimination."

China calls on workers to adapt to market economy

PEKING (Agencies) — The Chinese Communist Party Saturday issued a May Day call for workers to adapt to market economy and never return to socialist central planning.

"The workers' status as masters of the socialist state must be guaranteed and their work respected," the People's Daily said in a front-page editorial.

"On the other hand, the working class should change its thinking mode to meet the new situation as China converts from a planned economy to a socialist market economy," it said.

"We can never take the road back to the old system," the editorial said, calling for deeper reforms and faster economic development.

It acknowledged that economic reform would adversely affect some labourers, but said that political and social stability could be assured if the majority of workers benefited.

May Day is traditionally a major holiday in China, but the tone of celebrations has changed in recent years, with politically charged rallies and military para-

des giving way to family shopping trips and springtime outings to parks.

On Tiananmen Square, the authorities were displaying only pictures of the late chairman Mao Zedong and revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen for the holiday, where before portraits of Marx, Engels, Stalin and Lenin hung.

At a May Day gathering in Peking, General Secretary Jiang Zemin called on workers to "continue to play a leading role in the country's opening up and modernisation drives."

"Chinese workers have advanced ideology, fine qualities and a good tradition," the official press quoted him as saying.

The official China Daily reported recently that private enterprise now accounts for three-fourths of China's service sector and half of its commerce.

It said the country's estimated 15.3 million private businesses paid more than 20.3 billion yuan (\$3.5 billion) in taxes in 1992, up 17 per cent from 1991.

Their output has been increasing at an annual average of 18 per cent, the paper said, but did not give the 1992 figure.

The paper repeated projections that private enterprise will account for 20 to 25 per cent of China's gross national product by the end of the century.

However, Western analysts believe the estimates are too conservative because official figures underestimate the present size of the private economy.

They do not include businesses registered as "individual enterprises," often one-person or one-family operations such as sidewalk clothing stalls, snack vendors and the like.

Also omitted are many large private companies that are registered as subsidiaries of government companies or under some other disguise. Although the government has lifted many restrictions in recent months, private enterprises are still limited in the scope and kind of business they can do.

Banks often refuse to loan money to private businesses and they have difficulty obtaining hard currencies. Many "black market banks" have sprung up in coastal cities to meet the needs of private businesses.

Iran sees 6% economic growth

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's central bank governor Mohammad Hossein Adeli has said the country had "very desirable" foreign exchange reserves and its economy was on track for a second year of six per cent growth.

Mr. Adeli, painting a rosy picture of the economy at odds with daily Iranian press reports, said in remarks quoted by Iranian television that Iran's hard cash revenue would rise to \$22 billion in the Iranian year started March 21.

Hailing money reforms leading to a convertible rial last month as "an economic revolution and a turning point in Iran's economic history," Mr. Adeli said foreign exchange reserves were at a very desirable level and enough for supporting the currency.

He gave no figures but said the reserves were higher than in 1989. Iran had declared its reserves, including gold, at \$6 billion to \$7 billion in July 1989.

The rial is now set at 1,644 per dollar after a three-parity system, including an old official rate of about 67 rials per dollar, was scrapped in March — a devaluation of up to 96 per cent. The

rial was declared convertible on April 13.

"This policy will be permanent and continuous. There are no doubts about this," Mr. Adeli said, adding that the International Monetary Fund had officially recognised the rial as a convertible currency.

Mr. Adeli said foreign exchange earnings in the current Iranian year would reach \$22 billion but gave no breakdown.

The budget for the year envisages oil revenue at about \$17 billion, a figure termed over-optimistic by some parliament deputies. Non-oil exports totalled \$2.9 billion last year.

International oil prices are relatively weak and a Plan and Budget Organisation report printed in Tehran's Hamshahri newspaper last month said oil revenue in the nine months to Dec. 21 was some \$1.9 billion behind target.

Mr. Adeli said preliminary figures showed Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) rose between six and seven per cent in the last Iranian year and predicted a similar growth this year.

"The new policy will bring

order to imports, increase investment, employment and exports and create a preference for consuming domestic products rather than imports," he said.

Tehran newspapers report hundreds of layoffs in recent weeks because of cutbacks by state-run factories prompted by the devaluation.

They say prices of many goods jumped by up to 30 per cent after the devaluation, equal to the rise in prices in the first 11 months of last year.

Proposed Black Sea bank may seek foreign help

ANKARA (R) — A Black Sea cooperation group will need outside financial help for a regional investment bank designed to underpin trade and development projects, an official has said.

The official from the group's Istanbul-based secretariat said Japan, Gulf Arab banks, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank and the European Community were possible sources of financial help.

"Foreign assistance becomes a necessity when we consider the economic conditions of the participating countries," said the official, a Turk, who asked not to be named.

A working group from the 11 member-countries agreed in Athens last month that the proposed bank should have a capital of one billion Special Drawing Rights (\$1.4 billion).

The working group will meet in Varna, Bulgaria, on June 9-11 to discuss details such as each country's share in the bank, what currency unit it should use and where it should be based.

Its proposals will be discussed by foreign ministers meeting in Istanbul on June 14-17.

"The distribution of shares has not been decided yet. But we have, at least, scenarios for it," the official said.

Transparency International aims to fight corruption in business, trade

BERLIN (R) — Politicians and business leaders from over 20 countries plan to launch a watchdog group in Berlin this week to fight large-scale corruption in government and world trade.

Calling itself Transparency International, the group aims to promote international standards for fair trading and help world business fight off pressure to grease outstretched palms.

"The decision reflects frustration and anger among government leaders in many countries over the impact of corruption and has been taken at a time when the general public, from Japan to Italy, is demonstrating outrage at the scale of bribery and kickbacks," it said in a statement at the launch Thursday.

Its initial focus will be on corruption rackets in developing countries, which skim funds off of both business transactions and development programmes meant to help people rise from poverty.

"The diversion of foreign aid into the accounts of businesses and public officials adds human misery among the world's poorest people while cheating taxpayers in industrial countries who finance aid," it said.

The launch of Transparency International comes at a time when scandals over widespread illegal contributions to politicians have rocked Italy and Japan, two members of the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations.

The collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) amid charges of massive fraud robbed big and small account holders around the globe, many of them Third World

residents who saw it as a bank with their interests at heart.

The 1991 BCCI failure, which hit 73 countries and left an estimated total debt of \$10 billion, exposed lax supervision in offshore banking centres and put pressure on institutions like the Bank of England to compensate depositors.

Western aid donors, no longer obliged to worry about Third World allies defecting to the communist camp, have also become increasingly critical of the corruption they used to accept as a political surcharge on their development programmes.

"We invite representatives from governments across the globe and from corporations active in international business to join our organisation," said Frank Vogel, vice-chairman of the group.

"Only through a real international coalition can progress be made on this front," he pointed out.

Among prominent figures backing the private group are former World Bank head Robert

McNamara, former U.S. deputy treasury secretary Peter McPherson, vice presidents Alberto Dahik of Ecuador and Festus Mogae of Botswana and senior officials from the United Nations, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), General Electric and Boeing.

"I hope the leaders of the Group of Seven will display leadership in the anti-corruption areas," Mr. Vogel said in a statement, referring to Group of Seven members the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Canada.

Mr. Vogel stressed the group's field of action would stretch far beyond only Third World or government corruption.

"The accounting profession in the U.S. is on the ropes because of massive lawsuits related to bank failures. The cost to the largest accounting of settling and defending against suits in 1991 was \$477 million or 10 per cent of auditing revenues," he said.

"The 1992 costs, I believe, were even higher," he said.

Tanzania president raises minimum wage

DAR ES SALAAM (R) — President Ali Hassan Mwinyi announced in a May Day message that Tanzania's minimum wage of about \$12 a month would be raised in July's budget.

He did not say by how much it would go up, but government sources said it would be a 15 per cent increase on the 5,000 shilling minimum monthly pay packet.

According to guidelines for preparing the budget for 1993/94, salary levels in the civil service have now fallen to "levels that undermine the efficiency of government services."

This would allow the lowest paid to claw back some of the ground lost to inflation, officials said to be running at 20 per cent annually, economists said.

Addressing a May Day rally, Mr. Mwinyi said he regretted that thousands of government staff

had been laid off under World Bank-backed reforms.

"We are not happy with this. But it has to be done, as there has been a serious case of over-employment," Mr. Mwinyi said.

"We did the same in 1986. But those who were laid off then just came back through the back door," he said, echoing official complaints that sacked civil servants and managed to get back onto bloated government payrolls.

By the end of this year, 10,000 jobs will have been slashed from the civil service. The government will not be hiring any new employees except for teachers and medical staff.

The redundancies are among the most drastic steps taken to launch Tanzania on a free market path, after years of ruinous home-grown socialism under ex-president Julius Nyerere.

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Serbs agree to peace plan; conditions worsen in Gorazde

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Serbs bowed to international pressure Sunday by accepting a peace plan intended to end the 13-month civil war but U.N. peacekeepers said conditions were worsening in the besieged town of Gorazde.

A Greek government spokesman said the Bosnian Serbs had agreed to the plan during a summit of Balkan leaders in Athens. The plan, which has already been approved by the republic's Croats and Muslims, must now be submitted to the self-styled Bosnian Serb parliament for ratification.

U.N. peacekeepers said they were concerned about the situation in the east Bosnian town of Gorazde where Serb forces have trapped about 60,000 Muslims.

Barry Frewer, spokesman in Sarajevo for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), said reports from doctors and ham radio operators in the town spoke of increased fighting.

"We've got reports from doctors coming out of the area saying there have been heavy casualties," he added. UNPROFOR has not been able to confirm the heavier fighting independently.

U.N. aid convoys have been unable to reach Gorazde, under siege since Bosnia's civil war began, for more than eight weeks although it is getting supplies parachuted by the U.S. Air Force.

Commander Frewer said a 10-truck relief convoy currently trying to reach Gorazde was held up at Podromanija, 35 kilometres to the northwest, "because we're

still having a lot of difficulty with the Bosnian Serbs."

Gorazde, Zepa and Srebrenica are the only three substantial Muslim enclaves left in eastern Bosnia following a Serb drive for sole control of the region which was ethnically mixed when the war began.

Their future was among the issues being discussed in Athens Sunday at talks between international mediators Cyrus Vance and David Owen and leaders of Bosnia's ethnic communities.

The peace plan would give eastern Bosnia, which borders the Serbian Republic, to the Muslims under a U.N.-sponsored proposal to divide the former Yugoslavia republic into 10 semi-autonomous ethnic cantons.

Diplomats believe the Serbs' military control of the region will eventually be recognised and that Gorazde and Zepa will become U.N. protected areas like Srebrenica.

Fighting has intensified around Bosnia since the Bosnian Serb parliament last week refused to endorse the peace plan.

The capital Sarajevo was quiet Sunday after intensive shelling Saturday killed eight people.

Muslim-controlled Sarajevo Radio reported fighting around the Serb-held river port of Brcko in northern Bosnia.

Muslim forces control a number of villages four kilometres south of the town which is at the narrowest point of the corridor of territory Serbs have taken across north Bosnia to link the Republic of Serbia with captured lands in Bosnia and Croatia.

UNPROFOR sent military observers to check claims by Sarajevo that six civilians died in Serb shelling and Serb claims that Muslims hit the centre of Brcko with mortar fire during the night.

The United Nations said the Muslim pocket of Bihać in north-west Bosnia which Serb forces attacked last week was hit by 287 shells Saturday including 19 which exploded in Bihać town.

In central Bosnia, where Muslims and their former Croat allies have been fighting over mixed territory, Commander Frewer said a ceasefire was consolidating around Vitez where British U.N. forces are garrisoned.

Serb forces accused Muslims of attacking Serb villages and positions in eastern and northern Bosnia.

The initialing of the Vance and Owen peace plan must be ratified by the Bosnian Serb parliament where hardliners have twice forced through its rejection.

The parliament is due to meet Wednesday to decide whether to back Mr. Karadzic and other Serb leaders clamouring for a yes vote.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in London Sunday at the start of a European tour to gather support for tougher action against Serbs, including the possibility of air strikes if they do not sign.

President Bill Clinton has continued U.S. contingency planning despite the Athens conference.

Mr. Christopher said before he left Washington that Serbs "must

do more than simply give us a signature on a peace plan...the clock is ticking."

"The signature could be reversed by the parliament but the important thing is that Dr. Karadzic has courageously committed his delegation to this plan," Lord Owen told reporters.

"We have got what we really wanted. Signatures on the plan," Lord Owen said. He expected the Bosnian Serb parliament to approve the plan and said the full force of all leaders in the Balkans would be working for this outcome on May 5.

Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis, who helped set up the last-ditch peace talks, said: "A new period of peace, cooperation and progress opens ahead of us in the Balkans."

Mr. Mitsotakis played an important role in getting the warring parties together for a final round of talks, overshadowed by threats of Western military intervention.

The peace plan divides Bosnia into 10 autonomous provinces along ethnic lines. Lord Owen said it would require a "substantial peacekeeping force" and that he hoped U.S. troops, among others, would play a role.

The peace envoys will now focus on the task of rebuilding the war-shattered republics of the former state of Yugoslavia, which was torn apart when the former Communist state began disintegrating in June 1991.

Lord Owen said they would also be trying to ensure peace and an end to fighting elsewhere, especially Serb held strongholds in the Republic of Croatia.



The new mediator for the Yugoslav conflict, Thorvald Stoltenberg (left), and Lord Owen (2nd from left) welcome Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic to the two-day peace summit in Athens. Serb politician Nikola Koljeric looks on (AFP photo)

Tambo buried as ANC soldiers fire gun salute

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies) — ANC soldiers fired a 21-gun salute as former African National Congress (ANC) President Oliver Tambo was buried here Sunday.

ANC President Nelson Mandela held his right hand in the ANC's clenched fist salute as the coffin was lowered into the ground to the strains of "The Last Post."

Mourners among the 15,000 who had gathered outside the cemetery in Watville black township, south of here, fired answering shots as three Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) cadres fired a 21-gun salute with 12-gauge shotguns, despite appeals by ANC Secretary General Cyril Ramaphosa that the military farewell should be restricted to MK soldiers. The MK is the ANC's armed wing.

Two MK members removed the ANC's black, green and gold flag that had been draped over Mr. Tambo's coffin and handed it to his widow Adele.

The immediate burial site was strictly controlled by some 100 MK soldiers, who restricted access to dignitaries and family. The service was peaceful, but ANC members battled to control thousands of Watville township residents who wanted to get into the cemetery.

Mr. Tambo, 75, who died last Saturday after suffering a massive stroke, was transported in a white hearse from a funeral service at a soccer stadium outside Soweto black township earlier Sunday.

The ANC bade farewell to Mr. Tambo Sunday with a funeral service held under the shadow of a new massacre of whites by black gunmen.

Mr. Mandela paid tribute to Mr. Tambo and his legacy with a reference to democracy negotiations that are thrashing out a new constitution for a non-racial South Africa to end 300 years of white supremacy.

"We are watching a new dawn ... we can see it that we have it in our power to transform South Africa into what you want it to be ... free, just, prosperous and at peace within itself and the world," he told mourners.

But in contrast with the funeral of slain Communist Party leader Chris Hani two weeks ago, when the stadium was packed to its 80,000 capacity, the crowd numbered only a few thousand.

Mr. Tambo's funeral service followed an attack on a hotel bar in the port of East London Saturday night.

Black gunmen wearing Balacava helmets to hide their faces attacked the Highgate Hotel in the port city with AK-47 assault rifles, killing five whites and wounding six other whites and a black barman.

Eastern Cape Police Commissioner General Daan Huggert said police were searching for five people. Police earlier said three blacks carried out the raid.

Mr. Huggert said it resembled attacks since November on a golf club and a motel bar in the region. The two attacks killed five whites.

50 houses torched as clashes continue in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India (Agencies) — At least 50 houses were set ablaze in clashes between Muslim militants and Indian Border Security Council (BSF) guards in the Kashmir town of Sopore, officials and reports said here.

Police said the clashes erupted after the militants fired several rockets at a BSF bunker killing one guard and injuring five soldiers late Saturday night in Sopore, 54 kilometres north of here.

"One BSF soldier has died in the rocket attack," said Kashmir's Deputy Police Chief Azhar Noman, adding that sporadic clashes in Sopore between the guards and the rebels were continuing Sunday.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said some 50 houses were set ablaze by the rockets fired by the rebels at the BSF bunker in Sopore's busy Hatishah residential district.

Earlier Sunday, other police officials and witnesses said the BSF men went on a rampage burning 15 houses in the tiny apple-growing town.

Details of civilian casualties caused by the arson or the clashes in Sopore were not immediately known. PTI quoted a government spokesman as saying in Srinagar, Kashmir's summer capital and the urban hub of a Muslim separatist drive.

Noman said he was leaving for Sopore with a contingent of policemen to take stock of the situation. "We will come to know what is happening when we reach there," he added before setting off for the remote town.

Vijay Shankar, inspector-general of the BSF, however, did not confirm the death saying the militant-led attack injured three guards and caused serious damage to a communication installation in the Sopore bunker.

Kashmiri militants generally use shoulder-fired rocket propelled grenades to attack Indian posts.

"Fire trucks could not reach Sopore immediately because of the extensive firing by the militants," the spokesman said but added that the blaze was later brought under control.

The BSF official said paramilitary reinforcements from the Kashmir town of Baramulla had been rushed to Sopore, a bastion of the Kashmiri militants, to restore normalcy.

The overnight rocket attack and Sunday's alleged retaliation by the BSF follows the death of six civilians on April 19 in Sopore when Indian border guards opened fire on a Muslim procession.

Three of those killed were Muslim students caught in the firing, and observers said the Saturday night rocket attack on the BSF bunker was to avenge last month's killings.

On Jan. 6, BSF soldiers peppered the town with bullets and torched 200 shops and homes, killing 50 people in retaliation against a militant attack on another paramilitary post.

The January incident prompted an investigation into the role of the BSF in the arson.

Meanwhile, most of Kashmir's police were back at work Sunday, four days after troops broke a strike by storming police headquarters and disarming the men, senior officers said.

They said most policemen reported for duty despite a call from their strike committee to stay out until Monday.

The committee had demanded the arrest of a senior army officer accused of involvement in the death of a policeman in army custody.

The government turned down the demand, officials said.

About 400 Russian hardliners continue rally a day after clash

MOSCOW (AP) — About 400 pro-Communists rallied quietly next to the Russian parliament Sunday, denouncing President Boris Yeltsin as a "butcher" one day after a violent clash with police at May Day march.

The Russian prosecutor-general's office has begun an investigation into Saturday's street battle in Gagarin Square, the worst violence in the Russian capital since the failed August 1991 coup. A separate investigation is being conducted by a commission set up by the Communist-dominated parliament.

The violence reflects the ongoing campaign by Mr. Yeltsin's foes to undermine his victory in last Sunday's referendum, in which a majority of voters expressed confidence in Mr. Yeltsin and approved of his economic policies.

Interior Ministry officials said 205 police — including 181 riot troops — were injured, with 27

hospitalised with concussions and cuts, according to the Interfax News Agency. It said 12 demonstrators were hospitalised.

There was no overall estimate of injured demonstrators, although officials said Saturday that 70 were hurt.

State-run television reported no deaths in the clash. The leader of the pro-Communist demonstration, Viktor Anpilov, had claimed that one demonstrator was killed, but he gave no details.

One of the injured riot troops, Vladimir Talaknev, 25, was listed in serious condition Sunday at Clinical Hospital No. 1, the TV report said.

At least 20 people were arrested, Interfax said.

On Sunday, about 400 nationalists and Communist supporters gathered peacefully next to the Russian "White House," as the parliament building is called. Some had spent the night on

a grassy hillside next to the building.

As police watched from a distance, hardliners passed around petitions urging a special session of the Congress of People's Deputies on the incident. Many people milled around in small groups for political discussions.

In an almost picnic-like atmosphere on a warm, sunny day, a table was spread with loaves of bread, and thirsty demonstrators dipped tin cups in a communal pot of water.

But the mood was angry, with posters that said "Yeltsin — the butcher of Russia" and "the people will win."

One man who refused to give his name sported a red-and-purple bruise on his right eye, and said he was beaten up by riot police during Saturday's march.

"I'm 56 years old. How can I be a militant?" he said. "I had bare hands, and was defending a woman."

President's killing may intensify Sri Lankan war

COLOMBO (R) — The Sri Lankan government is likely to intensify the war against Tamil separatist rebels after the killing of President Ranasinghe Premadasa by a suicide bomber, military sources said Sunday.

"Now that the political leaders have themselves been targeted they are likely to put more effort to finish the war against (the Tamil rebels)," a senior military officer declared.

"Earlier it was mainly the soldiers who were losing their lives," he said.

The government Sunday began moving battle-hardened troops to the south from their northern and eastern camps in case of further violence in the capital.

The soldiers are likely to return to the war zone if the situation remained calm after Mr. Premadasa's state funeral Thursday, the military sources said.

Mr. Premadasa was blown up by a suspected Tamil suicide bomber, said by the military to be as young as 14, at a May Day procession Sunday.

The separatist rebels, who have fought a decade-long struggle for their own homeland, have denied involvement.

The military wants to prevent any recurrence of the July 1983 riots against minority Tamils sparked off by the funeral of 13 Sinhalese soldiers killed in a rebel ambush.

Tens of thousands of people, some weeping openly and beating their chests, mourned the assassination of President Premadasa by visiting his home and walking past his body as it lay in state Sunday.

His widow, Hema, and his 23-year-old daughter, Dulani, who had just returned from London, broke into tears, threw their arms around each other and buried their faces in a flag on the coffin.

As they were helped away, the 25,000 people waiting in lines outside the building continued to walk past the coffin guarded by four soldiers holding golden swords and bowing their heads.

Some of the mourners in this predominantly Buddhist country worshipped the coffin in a traditional way by falling to their knees, folding their hands in prayer and dropping their heads to the floor.

In a nearby government building, cabinet ministers held their second emergency meeting since the assassination of Mr. Premadasa.

The assassination, which occurred eight days after a top opposition leader was gunned down by a lone assailant in the capital, has left this Indian Ocean island nation in a deep crisis.

It could intensify a guerrilla war by ethnic Tamils in northern and eastern Sri Lanka and lead to a violent struggle for power between the governing party and the nation's many opposition groups.

Lalith Athulathmudali, leader of the opposition Democratic United National Front, was gunned down on April 23 while addressing a rally in Colombo.

Goliath makes a comeback in Danish referendum campaign

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — David confronts Goliath again this month when Danes vote on the European Community's (EC) Maastricht union treaty for the second time, but Goliath is now ready for the sling and things look bad for David.

Denmark, the EC's third smallest country, voted "no" to the treaty with a tiny 50.7 per cent majority last June, shocking the Community's political establishment and blocking its plans for economic and political union.

But polls now indicate that the "yes" vote could be higher than 55 per cent in a second referendum on May 18, and analysts believe this will allow the EC to weld itself into a more integrated European union before the year-end.

For Drude Dahlerup, a political scientist and one of the leaders of the grass-roots June Movement that orchestrated the Danish "no" vote last year, the fun has gone out of the anti-Maastricht game.

"The campaign is hateful now. So many personal attacks are now being made on the 'no' side. The campaign is being Americanised," she told AFP.

The June Movement is opposed to the Maastricht Treaty for fear that it will spawn a United States of Europe where citizens hand over their democra-

tic rights to a militarily powerful super-government in Brussels.

"This is bloc politics. The whole idea was invented in the cold war. We want to be number one in the world. I think it's a dangerous idea," Ms. Dahlerup said.

An uneasy coalition of leftists and extreme-right nationalists, the June Movement prefers a stronger all-inclusive United Nations to an elite European union that risks excluding the new democracies of Eastern Europe.

And it fears that high Danish social standards could be sacrificed on the altar of European uniformity, along with the rewards of a long battle in Denmark to give women an equal place on all levels of society.

The movement also feels betrayed because of what it considers a cynical, anti-democratic power play to overcome the Danish "no" last year.

Under Community rules, the treaty needs the consent of all EC countries. Denmark was one of only three countries that dared submit it to voter approval, rather than just parliamentary vote.

The other two were France, which ratified the treaty with a razor-thin 51 per cent, and Ireland, which mustered a much bigger majority.

If the French vote had gone the other way, maintains the June

Movement, the plans for European integration would be dead. But little Denmark (population five million) was too small to matter.

So EC leaders engineered special exemptions for Denmark — opt-outs from a single currency, greater defence cooperation, European citizenship and police cooperation — if it reverses its "no" vote in two weeks.

Then the Danish establishment swung into action with the message that European union would go ahead with or without Denmark and that another "no" vote would see the Danes frozen out of the EC at tremendous economic cost.

For the June Movement, this was blackmail and betrayal. One "no" vote should have been enough, as it would have been in France, to kill the Maastricht treaty and keep the EC as it is now — essentially a single market.

People feel cheated at being asked to vote again, it maintains, as if their first vote didn't count because it did not suit the EC politicians.

And if they vote "no" again, they are told they will be punished through economic exclusion. "How can they exclude a country (from the EC) which only follows the rules and has done nothing wrong?" Ms. Dahlerup asks indignantly.

It has been a dirty campaign, she says. Some of the June Movement's leaders have been tarred with their past membership of Denmark's Communist Party, and there have been slurs about campaign financing.

The movement's main hope is that the Danes will be sufficiently resentful at all the pressure to vote "no" again. But even Ms. Dahlerup is pessimistic as opinion polls show a healthy "yes" trend.

If they vote "yes" she plans to continue campaigning against the Maastricht Treaty ahead of the next battle in 1996, when EC leaders have scheduled a conference to take the integration process even further.

The largest private-owned investment bank in Iraq

Iraq's Middle East Investment Bank, which has a capital of 400 million dinars, has lately offered shares to members of the public.

The bank aims, among other things, to invest national savings in industry, agriculture, housing, services, tourism and development projects, in addition

to conducting the normal banking operations.

The Iraqi Middle East Investment Bank hopes to open branches outside Iraq after obtaining permission from the financial authorities. Shares have been offered for sale since April 24, 1993 and the offer will last for one month.

COLUMN

Tokyo palace may kick the habit of cigarette gifts

TOKYO (R) — The Japanese palace is considering kicking the habit of offering cigarettes as gifts at banquets when Crown Prince Naruhito gets married in June, news reports said Sunday. "We are considering excluding cigarettes as royal gifts this time as we prepare other items," Kyodo News Agency quoted a source at the Imperial Household Agency as saying. The agency instead is thinking of giving a small box of confetti and a sake cup to each of about 3,000 dignitaries and other guests at banquets to be held from June 15-17. By palace tradition, the palace gives away "imperial cigarettes" as souvenirs to local people when the imperial family tours the country.

Tourist held with counterfeit money provided by bank

GENEVA (AFP) — A Swiss citizen bought dollars from a bank here and set off for what he hoped would be an enjoyable holiday in Costa Rica. But instead, the newspaper Le Nouveau said, he was arrested in San Jose when he tried to change the dollars for local currency. The dollars were counterfeit. The tourist managed to convince the Costa Rican authorities that he had acquired the money legally, but they still confiscated his passport and it was several days before they allowed him to return to Switzerland. Le Nouveau said the tourist had been reimbursed the money for the counterfeit money, but has so far not agreed to pay damages for his wrecked holiday.

Switzerland has 73,000 millionaires

BERN (AFP) — Nearly two per cent of Swiss citizens declared themselves millionaires in 1991, while one third of taxpayers said they had nothing to declare, according to new official figures. The figures, released by the federal government, take into account those living in Switzerland, including their overseas earnings, as well as taxpayers living abroad. On average, Swiss citizens last year had a per capita income of 140,000 Swiss francs (\$98,000), according to the figures, which said there were 3,760,150 taxpayers with a combined income of 530.1 billion Swiss francs. The 1.9 per cent of millionaires — 72,822 people — owned nearly half (42 per cent) of the country's personal wealth, according to the figures. Thirty per cent of those liable to tax had no savings, 33 per cent declared between 1,000 and 50,000 Swiss francs, and 11 per cent between 50,000 and 100,000 Swiss francs.

British salesman fined \$14,160 for unpaid tickets

LONDON (R) — A British advertising salesman has been fined \$14,160 (\$14,160) for unpaid parking tickets under a new income-linked system of court fines. David Lockett, 37, who lives near Blackpool in north-western England, received one of Britain's highest motoring penalties for 15 summonses and failing to give details about the ownership of his car. "I was shell-shocked. I didn't know anything about the new law and fines. I just find it pathetic. It is almost funny it is so ridiculous," he said. A magistrates' court in Manchester fined Mr. Lockett \$600 (\$944) for each offence after he failed to submit a form detailing how much he could afford to pay.

French prosecutor wants to let off Brando's daughter

PAPEETE, French Polynesia (R) — A French prosecutor has recommended that charges be dropped against the 23-year-old daughter of U.S. film star Marlon Brando over the 1990 killing of her lover, justice sources said. They said the prosecutor believed there was insufficient evidence to pursue the case against Cheyenne Brando who has been charged with being an accomplice in the killing of Dag Drollet by her half-brother Christian Brando. The sources said it was now up to investigating magistrate Jean-Bernard Tallierio to decide whether to close the case or bring Cheyenne to trial. In 1991 a Los Angeles court jailed Christian Brando for 10 years for shooting Mr. Drollet in Brando's Beverly Hills estate after he heard Cheyenne, then four months pregnant, complain of having been beaten by her lover. A judge in French Polynesia brought charges against Cheyenne on the request of Mr. Drollet's relatives.